



FIRST CLASS  
HOLIDAYS

# THE ULTIMATE A-Z OF JAPAN







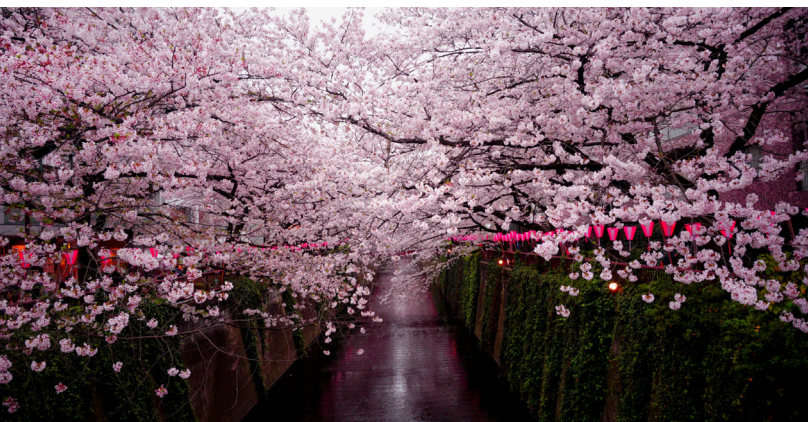
## AKIHABARA

Akiba is a district in central Tokyo that is famous for its many electronics shops and has also gained recognition as the center of Japan's otaki culture.



## BULLET TRAIN

Japan's main islands of Honshu, Kyushu and Hokkaido are served by a network of high speed train lines. They run up to a speed of 320km/h. The trains are known for punctuality, comfort, safety and efficiency.



## CHERRY BLOSSOM

Japan's unofficial national flower! It has been celebrated over many centuries and is a part of the Japanese culture. The season of the Cherry Blossom is celebrated with hanami (Cherry blossom viewing) parties under the trees.



## DOTOMBORI DISTRICT

Osaka's bright hotspot and tourist centre, filled with towering neon signs, clubs, bars and restaurants serving up local specialities. Today, the area is preserved in this retro-futuristic ambience perfect for tourists looking for a typical Japanese vibe.



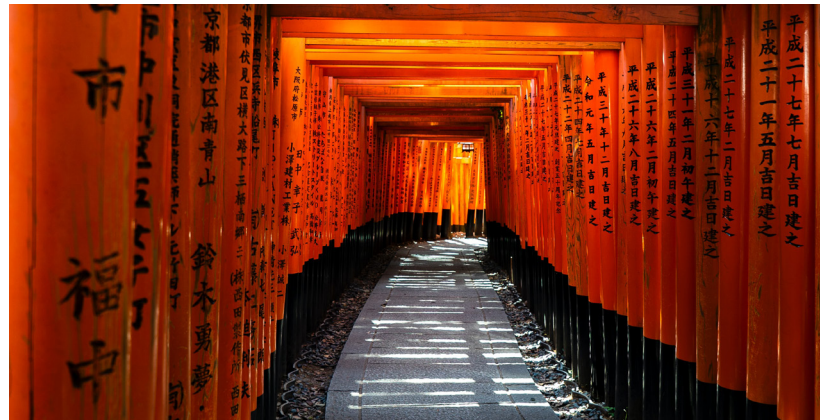
## EKIBEN

The development of Japan's rail network over the years has led to an entirely new food culture in the form of ekiben - boxed meals made for eating on the go. They are presented beautifully and feature a colourful array of ingredients including local specialties of each region.



## FUSHIMI-INARI

This is an important shrine in southern Kyoto. It is famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates. The trail leads into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari.





## GEISHA GIRL

Geisha are professional entertainers who attend guests during meals, banquets and other occasions. They are trained in various traditional Japanese arts, such as dance and music. Their role is to make guests feel at ease with conversation, drinking games and dance performances.



## HAKONE ROPEWAY

The Hakone Ropeway connects Sounzan Station with Togendai Station. The ropeway is fully covered by the Hakone Free Pass. The gondolas depart every 30 minutes. On the journey you can enjoy sites of the Owakudani Valley, Mount Fuji and Lake Ashinoko.



## ISLANDS

The Japanese archipelago is made up of over 14,000 islands, perfect for some island-hopping exploring. The country stretches from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north with its snowy winters and cooler summers, to the calm tropical blue waters of Okinawa in the south.



## JAPOW

It is said that some of the greatest snow in the world can be found on Japan's ski slopes in Hokkaido. JAPOW is the abbreviation for 'Japan Powder' – the iconic powder snow that has attracted skiers and snowboarders from around the world who insist on riding JAPOW at least once in their lives.



## KYOTO

One of Japan's key cities that has been the centre of unique culture and rich natural beauty over the past 1,200 years. Once the capital and emperor's residence, don't miss this city of historical significance on your Japan itinerary. Visit the grand shrines, ancient castles and traditional Japanese inns that give Kyoto its charm.



## LITTLE EDO

A scenic town filled with charm just 30 minutes from Tokyo's heart. Wander through the warehouse-lined streets and taste old-fashioned candy on 'Penny Candy Lane' as your journey back in time to Edo-era Japan on a visit here, the perfect contrast to the nearby metropolis of the capital.







## MOUNT FUJI

The tallest peak in Japan standing at 3,776 metres, Mount Fuji is a spiritual site, cultural icon and geographical wonder. The surrounding areas are popular for hiking, camping and relaxation, and is also an easy day tour to take from your stay in Tokyo.



## NISEKO

Niseko finds itself at the forefront of skiing in Japan with consistently cold winter temperatures, and regular snowfall. The season usually starts at the end of November running through to early May.



## OSAKA

Arrive to exciting nightlife and delicious food and take in some of the history and culture as well. One of the highlights is Osaka castle, where you can wander the beautiful grounds especially during the famous cherry blossom season when the Sakura blooms.



## POHTOCHO

The Pontocho district in Kyoto centres on a long, paved alleyway lined with traditional wooden buildings. The area comes alive in the evening, with numerous bars and restaurants and features the district's geisha and maiko apprentices in lavish costume at the Kaburenjo Theatre annually.



## QUEUING

Queuing in Japan is an art form – in rush hour well-mannered travellers wait in line for the train carriage to open and for all other passengers to disembark before they board. The locals are very obedient to the queuing system, so try not to cut in line at any time, no matter whether it is a queue for an escalator or to get into a restaurant.



## RAIL

Japan's rail network is arguably one of the best in the world. Services are safe, reliable and above-all punctual. Many of the itineraries we will create for you will feature some travel by the legendary shinkansen or 'bullet trains', travelling up to 320km per hour connecting most of the country's key cities.







## SNOW MONKEYS

The Jigokudani monkey park is covered with snow for around a third of the year and is home to the famous hot-spring bathing snow monkeys that will be there year round. Visit from Nagano, the mountainous heart of Japan, on a day tour.



## TOKYO MARATHON

The Tokyo Marathon is an annual event, and one of the World Athletics Platinum Label marathons, and one of the six World Marathon Majors. The first marathon took place in 2007, but previously consisted of two marathons: The Tokyo International Marathon which took place on even years, and the Tokyo-New York Friendship Marathon that took place on odd years.



## UKIYOE

Ukiyoe are Japanese woodblock prints from the Edo period, showing popular kabuki actors, sumo wrestlers and geisha. The word means ‘paintings of the floating world’ and were named so as their subjects were associated with detachment from ordinary life. You can appreciate some of the prints at galleries and museums across Japan.



## VIBRANT NIGHT LIFE

Late-night entertainment is an important part of Japanese culture. There is a vast variety of entertainment possibilities across all cities, from craft beer bars to high-end whiskey establishments and novelty bars. Enjoy a beer with locals at a cosy izakaya – a casual tavern – or experience karaoke in its home country.



## WEATHER

Arguably the best time to visit Japan is for the iconic blooming of the cherry blossoms in spring, between March and May or also between September. Summers can be hot and humid, and the rainy season is the end of May to July. Winters in the north are great for skiing on the powder snow enjoyable elsewhere if you don't mind chilly temperatures.



## XMAS

Japan's take on a Christmas cake is a strawberry shortcake, and people celebrate Christmas as a couple's holiday rather than a big family affair. Christmas Day is not a national holiday, but is marked with illuminations and commercial aspects rather than any religious ones.







## YAKISOBA

A classic Japanese stir-fried noodle dish seasoned with a sweet and savoury sauce. A range of proteins can be used such as pork, chicken, shrimp or calamari, and can also be made for vegetarians by substituting the meat for shiitake mushrooms.



## ZEN

Zen is a well-known school of Buddhism in Japan and aspects of Japanese culture have been greatly influenced or are direct expressions of Zen. Japanese Gardens, tea ceremonies and martial arts can trace their roots back to Zen.

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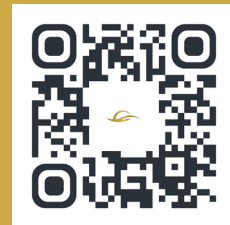
Independent Touring

## JAPAN TOOLKIT



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